

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171871

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BDIS, LI

SUBJ : A.S INDUSTRIES ATTORNEY CALLS ON ASSISTANT
SECETARY DAVIS

REF: MONROVIA 1372 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: ROBERT PATTERSON, ATTORNEY FOR AL INGBER AND
MATTHEW COHEN, CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS JULY 9.
PATTERSON WAS ACCOMPANIED BY INGBER'S BROTHER, ALSO AN
ATTORNEY, AND W/O MORE FAMILAR WITH CASE. PATTERSON ONLY
RECENTLY RETAINED. PATTERSON AND INGBER BRIEFED DAVIS
RE SUBJECT FIRM'S INVOLVEMENT WITH LIBERIAN BUREAU OF
CUSTOMS AND REQUESTED DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN SETTLING
CLAIM AGAINST GOL. END SUMMARY.

1. PATTERSON ACCOUNT OF EVENTS LEADING TO DISAPPEARANCE
DIAMONDS AND MONEY CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW
EXCEPT FOR TWO DISCREPANCIES: 1)HE ALLEGES COHEN HAD ON
TWO OCCASIONS PRIOR TO TEN MILLION DOLLAR DEAL BOUGHT
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25,000 DOLLARS WORTH OF DIAMONDS FROM DARAMEY AND EX-
PORTED THEM TO US WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. 2) PATTERSON ALSO
CLAIMS EMBASSY ASSURED COHEN HIS ACTIONS IN EACH TRANSAC-
TION CONSISTENT WITH LIBERIAN CUSTOMS REGULATIONS.

PATTERSON COULD PRODUCE NO DOCUMENT TO SUBSTANTIATE EITHER PURCHASE, STATED COHEN COULD NOT REMEMBER EMBASSY OFFICER WHO PROVIDED ASSURANCES, AND OFFERED NO EXPLANATION FOR COHEN'S FAILURE CONSULT EMBASSY PRIOR ARRANGING SUBSTANTIALLY LARGER THIRD TRANSACTION.

2. PATTERSON OFFERED COPY CUSTOMS RECEIPT MENTIONED REFTEL AS PROOF DIAMONDS DELIVERED TO CUSTOMS AND ROYALTY PAID. AMB. DAVIS THOUGHT IT RATHER ODD COHEN MADE ROYALTY PAYMENT IN CASH. PATTERSON AGREED, ADDING HOWEVER, COHEN ADVISED BY A.B. TOLBERT'S BODYGUARD FREEMAN (SIC) THIS ONLY FORM OF PAYMENT ACCEPTABLE BY CUSTOMS.

3. PATTERSON INDICATED CLIENT'S PRIMARY CONCERN NOW IS RECOVERY OF MONEY AND/OR DIAMONDS AND AVOIDING COUNTER SUIT FROM DARAMEY IN PROCESS. THEIR RELUCTANCE RETAIN LOCAL COUNSEL STEMS FROM A.B. TOLBERT'S DISINTEREST IN CASE, AND BELIEF LIBERIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM CORRUPT. PATTERSON ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBT LOCAL ATTORNEY WOULD HAVE ENOUGH CLOUT CHALLENGE TOLBERTS IN COURTS SHOULD INVESTIGATIONS REVEAL HIGHLY PLACED LIBERIANS INVOLVED IN FRAUDULENT ACTIVITY. PATTERSON ALSO BELIEVES GOL WOULD INVOKE SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY IF CIVIL SUIT BROUGHT AGAINST IT, THUS HE FELT COMPELLED INQUIRE IF DEPARTMENT WILLING MAKE REPRESENTATION BEHALF HIS CLIENTS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW EVIDENCE INDICATING QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES BRANCH OF GOL. DAVIS TOLD PATTERSON EMBASSY WOULD BE REQUESTED REEXAMINE EXISTING FACTS AND DETERMINE WHAT FURTHER ACTION IF ANY, NECESSARY, BUT REMINDED INGBER AND COHEN THAT US GOVERNMENT LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY TO ACT FOR PRIVATE LITIGANTS OR TAKE THE PLACE AND ROLE OF COUNSEL.

COMMENT: L/AF ADVISES GROUNDS FOR DEPARTMENTAL INTERVENTION MAY EXIST, BUT IN VIEW OF QUESTIONABLE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING CASE, SUGGESTS PRESENT EFFORTS TO ASSIST BE CONFINED TO EMBASSY MAKING ROUTINE INQUIRIES AT CUSTOMS RE WHEREABOUTS DIAMONDS AND MONEY, OBTAIN EXPLANATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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TION RE SIGNIFICANCE OF CUSTOMS RECEIPT, AND RENEW EFFORTS LOCATE DARAMEY. KISSINGER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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